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Ministry of Forests and Range

AGREEMENT RECOGNIZES GITANYOW, HELPS BOOST NORTHWEST

TERRACE – A $2.1-million forestry agreement signed today by Gitanyow Hereditary Chiefs and Forests and Range Minister Rich Coleman will help boost the Northwest's forest economy.

"This agreement is a significant step forward in our relationship with the Gitanyow," said Coleman. "It ends years of legal action, and helps bring economic stability to the Northwest."

The agreement formally recognizes the existence of the Gitanyow Huwilp (Houses) and their territories, and outlines processes for planning and managing logging in Gitanyow territories.

Specifically, the five-year agreement:

- Provides revenue-sharing of $357,000 per year, and commits to develop alternative benefits and revenue-sharing options;
- Provides $275,000 for a Joint Resources Council between the Province and Gitanyow to facilitate cooperative planning, consultation and implementation of this agreement in the Kalum and Skeena-Stikine forest districts;
- Invites the Gitanyow to apply for a forest tenure for 86,000 cubic metres per year within their territory;
- Commits the province to spend $1 million on reforestation and outstanding silviculture work and watershed restoration in Gitanyow territories and $1 million on reforestation in the Nass timber supply area;
- Commits to the development of a joint sustainable resource management plan for Gitanyow territory by March 31, 2007 and voluntary deferral of logging in the Hanna-Tintina watersheds to March 31 2007; and
- Consults on the timber supply review processes that will lead to annual cut determinations within Gitanyow traditional territory.

In signing the agreement, the Gitanyow acknowledge they have been accommodated with regard to the change of control in Skeena Cellulose's forest licences, ending litigation that began in 2002.

Simooyghet Gwinuu (Godfrey Good, age 94), a Gitanyow Hereditary Chief, said, "This agreement will pave the path for our new beginning, and will set the foundation of how we work together with other governments for the future."

The Gitanyow Hereditary Chiefs represents the Gitanyow Huwilp, a collective of the eight historic Gitanyow Houses (Wilp) located approximately 140 kilometres northeast of Terrace.

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"The commitment to form a Joint Resources Council and work together on land and resource planning exemplifies the spirit of the New Relationship," said Aboriginal Relations and Reconciliation Minister Tom Christensen. "This agreement will help build economic opportunities for the Gitanyow and provide opportunities to strengthen the local economy."

To date, the Ministry of Forests and Range has reached agreements with 109 First Nations, granting access to more than 17.5-million cubic metres of timber and sharing approximately $123.5 million in revenue.

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